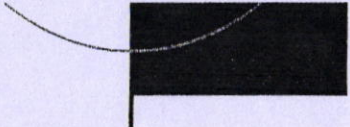


Caught in the Web of Deception



And Other Writings on Anarchists and the Media



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In the chatter of consensus, the police file starts against anyone who remains silent. Because to break off with the press and television, with the images and labels that they place on our backs, means breaking off with politics.

But the conclusion cannot be that of the autism of the ghetto, but rather that of a rebellion that gives itself its own tools of autonomous communication.

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Every text, every picture, every sound that pleases you is **yours**. Take it and use it as you will without asking permission.

The one-sided nature of information is the opposite of communication between individuals.

It recuperates. It invites us to dialogue with the institutions, it creates spokespeople and leaders, it integrates all subversive ideas and practices once it renders them harmless, separating them from their context, making us consume them without living them, suffocating them with the boredom of the already well-known.

It represses. It collaborates with the police in denouncing and slandering, it prepares the terrain for the with opportune alarmism, it publicly justifies their operations. Sometimes it represses by *admitting* an action *is right* – someone called this “laudatory repression” – i.e., by presenting that which is not subversive as being so, that which is just around the corner as distant, that which has just now started as finished. More often all one gets from the mass media is the work of falsification and repression, i.e., the more openly slanderous and criminalizing aspect. But rage against journalistic lies is short-lived since it can be undermined in less conflictual periods by series of sufficiently honest articles. The problem is not the honesty of the individual journalist or the accuracy of the articles, but rather the social activity of the mass media. In the media machine, intellectual qualities and ethical norms are swept away by the mass of information, by the “totalitarianism of the fragment” that is the true face of the news. Critical intelligence is formed through association, analogy, memory. News, on the contrary, is the product of separation, of details, of the eternal present. Media passivity is only the reflection of the passivity of work and of the market. As is well-known, the life that gets away from us comes back to us in the form of the image. The more one is *informed*, the less one knows, i.e., the less one lives.

Today no one can do politics without selling her image. Anyone who does not want to break with politics in all its forms does not want to break with media representation. He might insult journalists for several weeks, in the impossibility of doing anything else; then she will return to dialogue.

The media is necessary for mediating with power. It is itself, and recent events confirm this, what urges dialogue in order to, thus, foster the repression of those who don't dialogue with their enemies.

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CAUGHT IN THE WEB OF DECEPTION

The technological system for the dissemination of ideology, the media (I use the word media to refer specifically to this system in its totality, not to refer to specific tools it uses to carry out its function, since some of these tools can be used in different manner, even against this function), is an inherent part of the power structure and, therefore, an enemy of all rebellion and of every attempt to create free life.

The media plays a specific role in the power structure, a role that, in a democratic state, becomes not only essential, but also central to the functioning of power. But before continuing, it is necessary to confront the illusions many have about democracy. While it is true that democracy can merely mean a decision-making process which offers all involved a say or a vote in each decision (why this is incompatible with anarchy is a subject best dealt with at another time for the sake of brevity), in the present era, democracy is also and more essentially a system of state and social power which maintains social peace by allowing the expression of the broadest possible spectrum of opinions. The democratic state is able to allow such a broad spectrum of opinion precisely because opinions are basically substanceless. Opinions are ideas that have been drained of all vitality. Separated from life and from any projectual basis, they have become harmless blathering that ultimately strengthens the democratic state by making it appear tolerant and open as compared to feudal or dictatorial states.

From this, the political function of the media should be obvious. It is the mediator and processor of democratic opinion. It devours the complexities of life and social interaction, of international relations and insurgency, of cultural breakdown and economic necessity... the totality of reality in the present, and mashes them to mush between its teeth, then digests them and shits out...turds. All of the complexities, all of the vitality, all connection to real life has been leached out, and we are left to decide whether these nearly identical brown lumps stink or not. The reality from which from which these turds were produced is so distant that we "know" that we can't effect it directly, so in-

THE REASONS FOR A HOSTILITY About the Mass Media

Our hostility toward journalists – their words, their images – needs some more clarification. As we explain in the following notes, the point is not the greater or lesser honesty of the individual journalist or photographer, but rather the role of the media apparatus itself. That mass media has the pretension of being the total representation of reality is made obvious by this simple fact: for it, anyone who refuses to speak with journalists, "doesn't want to communicate with anyone". As if it was impossible to communicate in a direct manner, without the filter of the press and television. It is the same attitude that the political authorities have: anyone who refuses any relationship with them, so they tell us, refuses dialogue with everyone. And yet, despite the great steps forward in social domestication, the world is not just populated by authorities, cops and journalists. In fact, it is actually beyond and against their power that real dialogue begins.

The mass media is an integral part of the ruling order. As such, it forces participation, excludes, recuperates and represses at the same time.

It forces participation. Everyone must believe that the only reality that exists is that which the newspapers and television shape daily, the reality of the state and the economy. The media is the indispensable tool in the determination of consensus. It is the modern version of the myth, i.e., of the representation that unites the exploited with the exploiters. The media *socializes* the populace.

It excludes. Thoughts and actions hostile to this society must not appear. They must be silenced, falsified or rendered incomprehensible. Silencing when their very existence is an attack against the constituted order. Falsifying when *that which cannot be silenced* has to be opportunely reconstructed. Rendering incomprehensible when the media is forced to concede some partial truth to revolt, so that its total meaning goes unnoticed. The media takes every means of autonomous expression away from the powerless.

Update

The trial ended with the exoneration of Luca and the confirmation of Arturo's sentence (3 years and 8 months). After the sentence, a road blockade was carried out in the very center of via Roma, near the commercial offices of "*La Stampa*", with public speakers. During the blockade some writing was done inside the offices of the daily paper.

Cops came in large numbers and 5 people were taken away.

In the evening, 3 arrests from the 5 stopped that afternoon were confirmed: It seems that the crimes are resistance, insult and perhaps others. Two of the three arrested (one of whom it seems will also be charged with attempted theft of an agent's pistol) were a couple who passed through the street (but with a suspicious appearance like punks). The other two who were stopped were released in the evening. One of the arrested was released on March 8. The other two comrades still locked up in the prison of Vallette had to wait for the appeal to the court of liberty.

On Saturday March 22, 2003 all the comrades were released from prison.

stead we buy the binary logic of the democratic state, argue at the pub over the stinkiness of turds and vote for those politicians whose bullshit exudes the sweetest aroma. To be for or against this war, that law, whatever candidate, policy or program is no threat whatsoever to power. The purpose of the media is precisely to promote the predigested thinking that keeps us passive in the face of a distant reality, always ready to choose between the options offered by the democratic state, options that all end up subjecting the chooser to the power of the state and capital.

The media has another essential function. It is the creator of images for consumption. It creates celebrities and personalities for people to look up to and vicariously live through. It creates role images for people to imitate in order to invent their "identity". It creates images of events separated from and placed above life. It is through these images, ingested uncritically, that people are to view and interpret the world, formulating their opinions out of this virtual unreality. To the extent that the media succeeds, the result is a passive, predictable population consuming the trash dished out by the social order.

In choosing to seek to get one's ideas across through the media, one is choosing to feed these ideas to this masticating monster, to offer one's self to this life-draining ghoul. For anarchists this makes no sense. It is impossible for the media to portray anarchism as a living praxis or anarchists as complex multi-dimensional individuals. It is therefore not possible to express anarchist ideas in a worthwhile way through this forum. The ideas will be chewed up and shat out as one opinion among many, one more turd about whose odor the public can argue. The living individuals get chewed up and shat out as images-of freaks, of intellectual brooders, of street rioters-but essentially as images not living, acting beings. The media is part of the power structure, and, as such, is our enemy. We can't play their game and win.

In dealing with the media on its terrain, one chooses to give up determining one's own actions on one's own terms. As the 60 Minutes episode made so clear, dealing with the media on its terrain is accepting delegation. One turns one's ideas over to the masters of "communication" to be masticated into more opinions in the ideological marketplace. One gives the reality of one's life over to these experts in separation to be turned into 60-second images of isolated events. One turns the activity of communication over to

those whose specialty is the one way "communication" of devitalized, pre-digested non-ideas and non-events that create social consensus. And then one complains about how badly one was represented in the media. Why did one choose to be represented at all? The choice to accept media representation is no less an acceptance of delegation than voting or unionism. The rejection of delegation, so central to an anarchist and insurrectional perspective, includes the refusal to deal with the media on its terms.

If we take self-determination and self-activity as fundamental bases for anarchist practice, the way to communicate our ideas is clearly to create our own means of communication. Graffiti, posters, communiqués, papers, magazines and pirate radio can all be used to express anarchist ideas without putting them through the masticating mechanisms of the media. These self-determined means of communication can be distinguished from the media in that they are not attempts to mediate opinions and images while claiming objectivity and dishing out pre-digested pabulum to a passive audience; they are actual attempts on the part of anarchists to express their ideas not only in the words but also in the method through which they go about expressing them. Of course these methods, which we can take into our own hands, will not get out to nearly as many people as a mainstream newspaper, magazine or television show. But such considerations could only be of significance to those who want to evangelize, to those who view anarchy as a belief system to which we must convert people if there is ever to be a revolution. To paraphrase some Italian comrades: if one has no commodities to sell, of what use are neon signs? And in the era of the reign of capital, evangelism - even anarchist evangelism - is ideological marketeering. To those whose interest is creating their lives as their own and destroying the society that prevents this, such marketeering is worthless.

In this light, the collective action of some Italian anarchists becomes exemplary. When a journalist invaded the funeral of their comrade in search of a juicy morsel of news, they drove him out with blows.

Excerpts from a Spontaneous Declaration Made During the First Degree Trial in Ivrea

"Every day journalists show us a false reality, useful only to the bosses and those in power. They educate us in the acceptance of a world of misery and oppression, presenting it to us as the only world possible. They foment hatred between the exploited and justify every abuse and act of violence carried out by their masters, the rulers (and the examples are before the eyes of all).

"For their careers, these opinionated pen-pushers destroy the existence of millions of human beings who are not permitted to have a voice.

"Here, Genco is all this and more. Genco has spilled more ink than anyone else to defame anarchists, and in particular Baleno [Edoardo Massari's nickname]. This necrophile did not even have the decency to stay home on the day of the funeral of one of his victims. This vulture came to Brosso to provoke us, not giving a damn about the sorrow of friends, comrades and family, and for his insult, he received a prompt, dignified and collective response.

"Genco only got what he deserved."

- In these years Genco intensely dedicated himself to Edoardo, to his family who didn't quite know what to do, to which people he visits... the personal comments about Edoardo were squandered, since Genco never met him in person. In compensation he tried to extort from the parents and the relatives some malign gossip about him, finding first the news of an independent child made by two normal and comprehensive parents, and then the indignation of the same for his articles.

- In December 1993, conflicts occurred in Ivrea during a demonstration in Solidarity with Edoardo, still in prison. Genco offered to identify the prisoners and to testify against them. The photos of the conflict were offered to the police by journalists. The trial was also in course - the appeal would be held in Turin the next 6th of may - and in the first degree the defendants were sentenced to various months of prison.

- In the years of sabotage against the High Speed Train, Genco used to attach to the articles about Val di Susa a summary about Massari describing him as a terrorist bomber.

- After Edoardo's arrest, Genco would continue to sling mud at anarchists, Edoardo and his family with all kinds of slander.

TO INFORM TO OBEY ...?

The journalist is always the best friend of those in power and of the cops. S/he is the one who smooths the path for them, who conceals their violence, always ready to justify it, who publicizes their misdeeds and applauds them or who criticizes them so that next time they can strike better.

It is thanks to journalists that we have become so weak, frightened and divided as to not be able to react to the daily repression and the suffocating control of our existence. The television news is defining everyone who rebels - against the war, against exploitation, against increasingly precarious and vile living conditions - a terrorist, an individual dangerous for all. It is from the pages of newspapers that the rage of the exploited is thrust into the treacherous arms of the parties and unions, that have managed our exploitation up until yesterday, and today would like to manage our protest.

Journalists are the enemies of anyone who is exploited and no longer wants to be so, of anyone who is a slave and wants to free himself, of anyone who is without strength and wants to take a breath.

Of the rhetoric about "freedom of information", of the myth of the free and independent reporter that exposes the powerful with his pen and denounces their misdeeds, nothing is left but empty words. The journalist is simple functionary, the central gear around which the the information machine turns. Its close collaboration with the police headquarters, their inevitable dependence on all the groups in power, in fact, sets them against all those who are not in power. Even were one to open some space for truth in a newspaper, one would drown in the sea of banality and lies that it contains. Absurdity of absurdities, it would be like trying to express some rebellious thought on call-in radio.

An information grinding machine, built to create consensus and to maintain the social peace, the manipulates our greatest weaknesses and our worst fears.

The press incarnates for its readers the realization of a hope: that there are those who foresee and everything follows the straight path. It is at the same time *information* and *judgment*. It is also a tool against boredom, capable of consoling even if it doesn't manage to gather anything intelligible from the surrounded world. The desire that many readers have of a clean, ordered world in which one feels at her ease – that is sought and found on the pages of the newspapers – also contains within itself the anxiety about this world, considered incomprehensible without the help of others. Thanks to its authority, the newspaper relieves the reader of the necessity of arranging, sifting and valuing events, Furnishing the reader with accounts of what has happened that have already been ordered and commented on in a synthetic and safe way, the press gives the consoling certainty that one is still in a position to confront and understand reality, in order to feel like part of this world. Even the reports dedicated to “true stories”, to little daily incidents, take on a meaning: they give the readers the feeling that they are speaking of the people, of human fate, of the problems of men and women exactly like each one of them. And one can calmly rely on a newspaper that shows so much interest in the human side. The press appears to be a good companion, that is always there when it is needed, managing to hide the considerable power of persuasion available to it. What stands out is always the question/demand from the readers for tools useful for understanding the society in which they live, that necessarily becomes increasingly abstract, leading events back to the individual and his fate, joined with the desire to conserve objects of identification and projection on which to be able to finally unload personal worries and problems. This is the intimate/deep mechanism that creates public opinion, that influences, that furnishes the commonplaces of discussions for millions of people. The newspapers build their power on this, closely intertwined with the interests of power.

Daniele Genco: a consistent career

- Daniele Genco, before he began his career as a journalist of the second order, worked at Olivetti, the biggest enterprise of the Canavese. Already her he had distinguished himself, drawing upon himself the contempt of his workmates as an informer. Genco's role was, in fact, that of controlling the worktimes and absenteeism of his colleagues in order to then refer them to the bosses.

- Having begun his journalistic career, to which he dedicated himself with many fantasies, Genco managed very quickly to make it understood what kind of dough he was made of. When there is no news he invents it; when he has to write, he pays not the least attention to the existence that is encroaching. One example from among them all, perhaps the most tragic: a young child died in 1991 from a banal domestic accident in a small center of the Canavese and, suddenly, a defamatory campaign against the mother was let loose from the pages of all the local papers. In this case too Genco distinguished himself coming – the first of the judges – to accuse the woman in his paper of homicide. Although the people of the region openly defended her, the woman was taken to court and, exasperated by the rumors that the paper continued to spread about her, hanged herself in 1993.

- It is due to the bathing pool in Caluso that Genco began to concern himself with anarchists, and in particular Edoardo. In his paper he applauds the operation of the forces of order at the time of the eviction and passes the violent charges of the military police against the occupiers of as an “urban guerrilla war” between the military and the autonomes. The climate created by the papers against the occupiers would justify the sentences inflicted successively by the Court.

- In 1993, Edoardo went to the hospital in order to get medical care for a slight injury that he got while making a firecracker. The military police immediately took advantage of this, searched his office where they found forty grams of black powder, and arrested him. The journalists, among who Genco stood out, would speak of a dangerous “terrorist” who was preparing to carry out attacks, including one at a public demonstration of the Red Cross.

For a world without jackals

A march in solidarity with Luca and Arturo, Thursday March 6, 2003, 9:00, at the Palace of justice of C.so Vittorio Emanuele, third section of appeal

"Injustice has a name, a surname and an address"

On March 6 in the Court of Appeals of the Tribunal of Turin, the second degree trial in which two anarchists, Luca and Arturo, are charged for events that occurred in Broso five years ago during the funeral of Edoardo Massari will take place. Edoardo was an anarchist accused of sabotage against the high speed train project and found dead in his prison cell in Vallette, suicided by judges, police, journalists and politicians.

Luca and Arturo have been accused by the inquiring magistrates of being among the principle people responsible for the aggression against Daniele Genco: journalist, police confidante and always among the greatest accusers of Edoardo. For this, our two comrades were sentenced by the court in Ivrea - after a trial that was, to say the least, surreal - to 3 years and 2 months and 3 years and 6 months in prison respectively.

We are not interested in discussing the fundamentals of this trial here. Instead we want to claim in the act in Broso an act of justice, an act of collective resistance, against those who have accused, discredited and offended our comrade in the pages of the newspapers; against those who daily insult and sully millions of exploited people, men and women who are kept from having a voice.

Today, so that the role of journalists in the justification of war, repression in the streets, racism might be evident to everyone, today more than ever again a little act like that of Broso is an indication, an example to follow. Therefore, we invite those that still have a heart and a mind to demonstrate their solidarity with Luca and Arturo, but above all, we invite anyone to come with us who is filled with disgust every time that s/he opens a newspaper to give their contribution to liberating the world from the pack of jackals and from the terrorism of Information.

Solidarity to all prisoners, to all the victims of judges in every part of the world, to all those who suffer journalistic and police terrorism.

A bit of history

Almost five years have already passed since those days that, at least for a few, disturbed the calm of Turin. Then the bogeyman of the "terrorist around every corner" was not yet present as it is today on the pages of the newspapers, but something already fore-shadowed what would quickly become a normal police practice.

So, one morning, a maxi-operation of the forces of order led to the search of various occupied houses in Turin and to the arrest of three anarchist comrades: Edoardo, Sole and Silvano. The charge against them was subversive association with the aim of terrorism along with a whole series of specific crimes. In substance the investigating magistrates accused them of being the authors of various acts of sabotage carried out in Val di Susa against the High Speed Train project. For the politicians and bosses - and clearly for their robed servants - it wasn't acceptable that the inhabitants of a valley would oppose, even practically, a project that everyone considered harmful; it was not acceptable that anonymous individuals, in order not to see their land and their health further destroyed, would decide not to give a damn about legality. Thus, it was necessary to give the mysterious saboteurs a name, it was necessary to enclose the conflict within a private war between the state and its law, and whatever other subject. A few anarchists would be chosen who had never hidden their hostility toward this latest harmful projects among so many others.

Thus, the judiciary and the police built up a delirious castle of charges in order to be able to add to the condemnation, and at the same time, journalists - every one of them - occupied themselves with defaming the three arrested comrades in the eyes of the people. The struggle that had been going on in Val di Susa against the High Speed Train through sabotage was also itself discredited and reduced to silence. The state achieved a victory, managing to check a real possibility of blocking the High Speed Train. Now that the project of "death at high speed" is definitively past and the train yards/ buildings are under construction pretty much everywhere, it should be clear that the weapon of terror and division is the greatest tool in the hand of those in power.

A few days after his arrest, Edoardo was found hanged in the

prison of the Vallette, in July also his comrade Soledad hanged herself in the bathroom of the house in which she was being held under house arrest, Silvano remained under arrest and would only be acquitted of the charge of subversive association and sentenced to a few years in prison for specific crimes several years later.

We don't know precisely what happened within the walls of Vallette nor what pushed Sole to take her own life, but it remains the case that we are well aware of who is responsible for the disappearance of our comrades: the judiciary, the forces of order and all the journalists. They are their murderers.

After the arrests, in Turin and in many Italian cities, protest actions spread, but even in this case, the repression was not slow in making itself felt: for many of those who had acted in solidarity with the arrested comrades there was prison, notices of investigation and beatings.

Even at Edoardo's funeral, though family and friends had asked that it be held in private, the police and journalists would not give respite.

So the day of the burial, in the village of Brozzo, the cops were present in force and the roads swarmed with journalists ready to slander Edoardo for the last time. This time they did not have the best of it, and while the police remained barricaded in the village hall, the journalists were driven out, the good with the bad....

In particular, Daniele Genco, a journalist who more than all the others devoted himself to spattering Edoardo with mud and was an infamous confidante of the police – had already condemned various comrades in the past for conflicts during a demonstration in solidarity with Edoardo – had been well served on that occasion. Despite repeated warnings, Genco had decided to be present at the funeral in order to do his duty – they called him directly at the news – not giving a damn about the requests and feelings of Edoardo's friends and parents and, for this, he found himself again with broken bones.

In Brozzo, that day, Edoardo's comrades gave a dignified and collective response to repeated insults and provocations from journalists. For once it was shown that it is possible to make the jackals pay a bit for the things for which they are responsible.

This too could not be tolerated, so at his desk, the prosecutor of Ivrea chose three culprits and, a few days later, the arrest warrants were issued.

Arturo was never captured and, in spite of the police, is still today "nowhere to be found"; after months of being a fugitive, Andrea was put under house arrest and then exonerated in the first degree; Luca was immediately arrested and spent some time in prison, while outside a frenzied journalistic campaign endeavored to spatter him with mud.

After the heavy sentences of the court in Ivrea – even though mostly based on false testimony – on March 6 in the court of appeal in Turin yet another courtroom farce will unfold. The intention of the judges, as usual, will be to lock our comrades up in prison. Our intention is not to forget those days of five years ago and to very strongly confirm our complicity and our solidarity with the accused. As the murderers make their play, we will make ours....